

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Photograph



View from northwest.

Locus Map



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

18-025

ORLEANS

EAS.588

Town/City: Eastham

Place: South Eastham

Address: 15 Corliss Way

Historic Name: James P. Jr. & Dorothy Knowles House

Uses: Present: single-family residence

Original: single-family residence

Date of Construction: 1939

Source: deeds, tax records

Style/Form: Cape Cod

Architect/Builder: unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: concrete

Wall/Trim: wood shingles/ wood

Roof: asphalt shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures: 8x12 shed

Major Alterations (with dates): Porch addition off right (south) side of rear ell, 2009.

Condition: good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: .60

Setting: This house is sited on a .60-acre parcel with frontage on the north side of Corliss Way and the east side of State Highway. The lot features mature trees and shrubs, and it is surrounded by residential development.

Recorded by: Larson Fisher Associates with Kathryn Grover

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date: April 2013

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

15 CORLISS WAY

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

This one-story, wood frame single-family dwelling has a side gable roof with a brick center chimney. The front facade has four bays with two eight-over-eight double hung windows to the right of the paneled entrance door, and one to its left. Paired double hung windows are located in upper story/attic space on both end walls. Paired eight-over-eight windows replaced a picture window on the right side. All the windows are fitted with decorative window blinds. A small sunporch, slightly recessed from the front facade, extends from the right (south) side. It has a small cross-gabled rear ell to which a rear entrance porch facing Corliss Way has been added (replacing an earlier wood stoop). The porch has two pillars supporting a shed roof and 42-inch high millwork railing. A bulkhead off the right side, to the right of the porch, provides exterior access to the basement. Although the building appears to be intact, a September 29, 2009, building permit reveals that the house has been resided and reroofed and all the windows replaced. The porch appears to date to this time as well, as it is not in place on the Assessor's photo. An 8 foot by 12 foot gambrel-roofed wood frame shed with board-and-batten siding is located in the rear yard southeast of the house.¹

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Both deeds and tax records indicate that the house at 15 Corliss Way was built between late summer of 1938 and 1940. On August 27, 1938, Warren R. and Lois B. Corliss sold lumber company clerk James Paxton Knowles Jr. a parcel of land on the east side of State Highway containing 0.58 acres. The deed stipulated that "only one dwelling house and one garage with an outbuilding attached to the garage shall be erected on the granted premises." Both the 1940 census and Eastham tax records for the same year show James P. Knowles as a real property owner. The census enumerates him just before Warren Corliss.

Born in Somerville in 1888, Warren Rowe Corliss was a food broker and later a sales manager for a food supply company. His father Henry had been a butter and cheese dealer in Somerville. Corliss, his wife Lois, and his daughter Dorothy lived in South Braintree from the late 1920s, and in 1933 Corliss bought an undisclosed amount of land bordering Town Cove from Cornelia D. Dorflinger of White Mills, Pennsylvania, whose husband had acquired the tract from Knowles's father James Paxton Knowles Sr. in 1913 and 1914.² Knowles Sr., born in 1873, was a son of Freeman and Joanna Knowles. He lived in his father's Eastham household and farmed until he married Mellie Louise Walker, daughter of Nathan S. and Anna Walker of Eastham, in Boston in 1906. The 1930 census shows James P. and M. Louise Knowles residing on State Highway with their children Marie, age thirteen, and James P. Jr., age twelve.

In June 1938 M. Louise Knowles, acting as guardian for her minor son James, and her daughter Marie deeded their interest in the "James P. Knowles homestead" to Corliss, and the next month Corliss registered a plan for dividing the nearly eighteen acres he had acquired in 1933 and 1938.³ The land ranged from Town Cove on the east to a relatively small frontage on State Highway on the west. What became Corliss Way is shown as a right-of-way south of the .58-acre parcel Corliss sold to James P. Knowles Jr. in that year, probably shortly before or after he married. The 1940 census shows James P. Knowles as twenty-two years old and living on State Road with his wife Dorothy Gladys Doane Knowles, then nineteen years old. His property is valued there at \$4000, while tax records for the same year show him with a house valued at \$2500, a garage at \$50, a 1.4-acre homestead lot, and small amounts of other land in two parcels.

James Paxton Knowles Jr. graduated Orleans High School and served in the Philippines during World War II. He worked at the Mid Cape Center (now Mid Cape Home Center, a retail lumber, appliance, and building material store, in South Dennis since 1962) for sixty-three years. He died in 2005, and in 2009 the property passed to his daughter Anne M. Hobday, then living in St. Augustine, Florida. She and her husband Edward are the current owners of 15 Corliss Way.⁴

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¹ Eastham Building Permit record dated Feb. 1, 1988.

² Cornelia D. Dorflinger, White Mills PA, to Warren R. and Lois B. Corliss, Braintree, 24 October 1933, Barnstable County Registry Of Deeds (BCD) 498:308; this deed, conveying two contiguous parcels, cites the 1913 and 1914 deeds from Knowles.

³ Mellie L. Knowles, guardian of James P. Knowles minor, to Warren R. Corliss, 23 June 1938, BCD 540:378; Marie L. Knowles to Warren R. Corliss, Braintree, 23 June 1938, BCD 540:377. See also "Plan of Land in Eastham Mass Property of Warren R. Corliss et al.," 3 August 1938, BCP 58:37.

⁴ Genevieve Knowles, 1170 State Highway, to Anne M. Hobday, St. Augustine FL, 21 September 2009, BCD 24058:53; Anne M. Hobday, St. Augustine FL, to Anne M. and Edward C. Hobday, 5 November 2009, BCD 24152:116.

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Photographs

(credit Larson Fisher Associates, 2012-13 unless otherwise noted)



View from southwest.